

CLAIMS

- 1) An apparatus for emptying containers (2) of fruit and vegetable produce (3), the apparatus comprising a tipping device (9) for tipping at least one container 5 (2) and movable between a first operating position to load said container (2), and a second operating position to unload the container (2); and a conveying device (8) having an input station (26) for receiving the container (2) from the tipping device (9), and an emptying station (32) for emptying the container (2), the conveying device (8) feeding the container (2) in a given first direction (25) and along a path 10 (T1) extending between said input and emptying stations (26, 32); and being characterized in that said path (T1) is of a length (L1), measured parallel to said first direction (25), at least equal to a length (L2) of said container (2), also measured parallel to said first direction (25).
- 2) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, and also comprising a ejecting device 15 (34) for transferring said container (2) from the tipping device (9) to the conveying device (8) at a first traveling speed (V1); the conveying device (8) feeding the container (2) through said emptying station (32) at a second traveling speed (V2) lower than said first traveling speed (V1).
- 3) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said path (T1) is of a length 20 (L1), measured parallel to said first direction (25), greater than a length (L2) of said container (2), also measured parallel to said first direction (25).
- 4) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the conveying device (8) comprises first and second conveying means (27, 28) arranged in series along said path (T1); the first conveying means (27) feeding said container (2) along a portion 25 of the path (T1) having a length, measured parallel to said first direction (25), at least equal to a length (L2) of said container (2), also measured parallel to said first direction (25).
- 5) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, and also comprising an ejecting

device (34) for transferring said container (2) from the tipping device (9) to said first conveying means (27) at a first traveling speed (V1).

6) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 5, and also comprising actuating means for so controlling said second conveying means (28) as to feed the container (2) through said emptying station (32) at a second traveling speed (V2) lower than said first traveling speed (V1), and for so controlling said first conveying means (27) as to selectively feed the container (2) at said first traveling speed (V1) when transferring the container (2) from the tipping device (9) to the first conveying means (27), and at said second traveling speed (V2) during at least part of the transfer of the container (2) from the first to the second conveying means (27, 28).

7) An apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, and also comprising a further conveying device (7) for feeding said container (2) to said tipping device (9) in a second direction (10) sloping with respect to said first direction (25) by an angle (A) of other than 90°.